

BUDCO Employees Take Steps to Healthier Choices

Initiative in Brief

Brian Unlimited Distribution Company (BUDCO) has had a wellness program in place since 2004. Since their wellness committee only consists of three employees, it has always asked employees for their input and interests for programs to offer.

One of the first wellness initiatives that BUDCO implemented was a walking club. Employees earned miles by participating in physical activity, and their cumulative miles were tracked to reflect how far they had walked. A *Biggest Loser* program was a hit with employees; 250 signed up to participate! Since the conclusion of the challenge, employees from various departments have taken ownership of the *Biggest Loser* program and continued the competition to lose weight.

BUDCO received a small grant for worksite wellness and used a portion of the funds to offer incentives to employees for completing a health risk assessment. BUDCO also offers healthy lifestyle workshops twice a year. This year a dietician came in to demonstrate ways to eat healthy on a budget, and a professional massage therapist offered relaxation techniques and stress reduction tips. Dolunt said that diabetes is the number one health concern among their employees, so they try to provide classes and information that emphasizes better eating habits along with physical activity. BUDCO has also partnered with the YMCA and Powerhouse Gym to offer employees discounts when joining.

Dolunt knows that small changes work best with BUDCO's employees. "We can't make drastic changes. Employees will become dispirited. We have to educate our employees on making small changes that will have a positive impact on them and BUDCO in the future."

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Benefits

Noted benefits of the program are:

- Employees are looking at living healthier lives.
- Changed offerings in the cafeteria. Healthier items are being served, lower sodium, baked instead of fried, and healthy snacks such as yogurt.
- Employees will participate in programs of interest to them. Almost half participated in the *Biggest Loser* program.

"Diabetes is the number one problem among our employees. We talk about that and let them know that they have to start with what they eat. We offer a "healthy dish for the day" in our cafeteria. The management of the cafeteria is more mindful of healthy choices now."

Elizabeth Dolunt
Human Resources Manager
Brian Unlimited Distribution Company

Lessons Learned

- Incentives increase participation and adherence to the program.
- It's okay if not everyone makes changes immediately. Even changing one life because of a wellness initiative is worth it.
- Making changes in cafeteria options provides employees with healthier food options at work.

Cost: Seminars, incentives
Risk Factor: Overweight, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and other chronic disease risk factors
Impact/Reach: 550 employees
Business/Sector: Marketing, Communication & Distribution Services